

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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FACT SHEET

Boko Haram and U.S. Counterterrorism Assistance to Nigeria

“The kidnapping of hundreds of children by Boko Haram is an unconscionable crime, and we will do everything possible to support the Nigerian government to return these young women to their homes and to hold the perpetrators to justice. I will tell you, my friends, I have seen this scourge of terror across the planet, and so have you. They don't offer anything except violence. They don't offer a health care plan, they don't offer schools. They don't tell you how to build a nation; they don't talk about how they will provide jobs. They just tell people, “You have to behave the way we tell you to,” and they will punish you if you don't.”

--Secretary of State John F. Kerry

Nigeria is a key strategic partner in Africa. Nigeria has the continent's largest population and largest economy, and it plays a vital role in efforts to resolve crises and promote stability and prosperity in West Africa and beyond. In the midst of rapid economic growth, however, Nigeria faces security challenges, notably Boko Haram (BH), a violent Islamist movement that has staged regular attacks in northern Nigeria since 2010. Given Nigeria's importance as a regional political and economic leader, the U.S. has a vital interest in helping to strengthen Nigeria's democratic institutions, boost Nigeria's prosperity and security, and ensure opportunity for all of its citizens. The U.S. and Nigeria also work closely together in multilateral fora, including the UN Security Council, where Nigeria is serving a term as a non-permanent member for 2014-2015.

As the President noted in his National Defense University speech in May 2013, countering terrorism requires a holistic approach. We continue to work with Nigeria and other international partners to help promote and support such an approach to Boko Haram. The United States has been working to counter BH for many years, and we will continue to do so. The first part of this fact sheet provides information about BH and the many atrocities it committed in Nigeria prior to its attack on a girls' secondary school in Chibok, Borno State, where it kidnapped approximately 300 girls. The latter part provides information about various U.S. Department of State initiatives and programs to assist Nigeria's counterterrorism efforts, such as the Antiterrorism Assistance Program and the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership.

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The U.S. government designated Boko Haram as a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO) and as a Specially Designated Global Terrorist under Executive Order (E.O.) 13224 on November 14, 2013. (A transcript of an interview with senior officials about this designation can be found here: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2013/11/217532.htm>.) BH commander Abubakar Shekau, Khalid al-Barnawi, and Abubakar Adam Kamar were designated on June 21, 2012, as Specially Designated Global Terrorists under section 1(b) of E.O. 13224. (A fact sheet about FTO and

E.O. designations can be found here: <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2014/01/219520.htm>.) Since June 2013, the State Department's Rewards for Justice program has advertised a reward offer of up to US \$7 million for information leading to the location of Boko Haram leader Abubakar Shekau.

BH is a Nigeria-based group responsible for numerous attacks in northern and northeastern Nigeria that have killed thousands of people since its emergence in 2009, and conducted high-profile kidnappings of Westerners in the Far North Region of Cameroon. In 2013 alone, BH has carried out kidnappings, killings, bombings, and attacks on civilian and military targets in northern Nigeria, resulting in over 1,000 deaths and injuries. BH primarily operates in northeastern Nigeria, Cameroon's Far North Region, and the Lake Chad Basin, and receives the bulk of its funding from bank robberies and related criminal activities, including extortion and kidnapping for ransom. The group espouses a violent extremist ideology and at times has received some limited assistance, including funds and training, from al Qa'ida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM).

Among its most lethal attacks, BH was responsible for indiscriminate attacks in Benisheikh, Nigeria in September 2013 that killed more than 160 civilians, many of them women and children. Other major attacks that have been claimed by or attributed to BH since 2011 have included:

- An August 26, 2011, a bomb attack on the UN building in Abuja killed at least 21 people and injured over 120.
- On November 4, 2011, multiple vehicle-borne improvised explosive device (VBIED) and improvised explosive device (IED) attacks in Yobe and Borno States targeted security force offices and the Military's Joint Task Force (JTF) offices, as well as several markets and 11 churches. More than 100 people were killed, including nearly 70 bystanders at a major traffic circle in the center of Damaturu, Yobe State.
- On January 20, 2012, multiple near-simultaneous attacks in Kano State were carried out on at least 12 targets including police stations, an immigration office, and the residence of an Assistant Inspector General of Police. Over 150 persons were killed and hundreds were wounded.
- In April 2012, assailants attacked the Theatre Hall at Bayero University, Kano, with IEDs and gunshots, killing nearly 20 persons.
- On April 26, 2012, VBIEDs simultaneously exploded at the offices of *This Day* newspaper in Abuja and Kaduna, killing five persons and wounding many others.
- On June 17, 2012, attacks on three churches in Kaduna State killed worshippers and instigated violence throughout the State. At least 10 people were killed and an additional 78 were injured in the riots that ensued.
- On February 8, 2013 nine Nigerian women working in a polio vaccination campaign in Kano were killed by gunmen riding in three-wheeled motorcycles; several other polio workers were injured.
- On March 18, 2013, a VBIED attack on two luxury buses at a motor park in the Sabon Gari neighborhood of Kano killed more than 20 persons and wounded scores.
- On July 6, 2013, over 50 students were killed in their dormitories at Mamudo Government Secondary School in Yobe State.

- On August 11, 2013, gunmen killed approximately 44 persons praying at a mosque outside Maiduguri and another 12 civilians in a near-simultaneous attack at a nearby location in Borno State.
- On September 29, 2013, gunmen killed more than 40 students in the dormitory of an agricultural technical school in Yobe State.
- In November 2013, BH members kidnapped a French priest in Cameroon.
- On December 2, 2013, a coordinated and complex attack by violent extremists on the Maiduguri airport and air force base killed over 24 persons, wounded dozens, and destroyed a large amount of military equipment, including several military helicopters.
- On December 20, 2013, violent extremists assaulted the Nigerian army barracks in Bama, southern Borno State, in a well-coordinated attack that killed approximately 20 military personnel and numerous civilians.
- On January 14, 2014, at least 31 were killed and 50 injured by suicide bomber in Maiduguri, Borno State, Nigeria.
- On February 16, 2014, BH raided Izghe village, Borno State, killing an estimated 115 people.
- On February 25, 2014, over 59 teenage boys were killed in an attack on Federal Government College, Buni Yadi, Yobe State, Nigeria.
- On April 14, 2014, BH attacked a girls' secondary school in Chibok, Borno State, Nigeria, with 16 killed and approximately 300 girls kidnapped.
- Also on April 14, 2014, a morning rush hour bomb killed at least 71 on at a bus depot on the outskirts of Abuja.
- On May 5, 2014, an attack lasting 12 hours on towns of Gamboru and Ngala in Borno State, Nigeria, killed an estimated 300 people.

Counterterrorism Assistance to Nigeria

- Counterterrorism support to Nigeria focuses on building critical counterterrorism capabilities among Nigeria's civilian and law enforcement agencies. This supports the larger U.S. objective of encouraging Nigeria to develop and implement a comprehensive approach to counter BH that upholds and enforces the rule of law, provides civilian protection, respects human rights and international norms, and addresses the underlying grievances that BH exploits (including through development gains and through responsive governance).
- Based on our longstanding concerns about Boko Haram, we have a robust security dialogue and assistance relationship with Nigeria. As part of the Bi-National Commission Framework, we hold regular Regional Security working group meetings focused on the Boko Haram threat and ways our two governments can collaborate on a holistic approach to countering the group.
- Our security assistance is in line with our efforts to ensure Nigeria takes a comprehensive approach to countering Boko Haram. We are working to build Nigerian law enforcement capacities to investigate terrorism cases, effectively deal with explosive devices, and secure Nigeria's borders, while underscoring that the most effective counterterrorism policies and practices are those that respect human rights and are underpinned by the rule

of law. We are also focused on enabling various Nigerian security services with fusing multiple information streams to develop a better understanding of Boko Haram. Our military assistance supports the professionalization of key military units and improves their ability to plan and implement appropriate steps to counter Boko Haram and ensure civilian security.

- The State Department's Antiterrorism Assistance (ATA) program enhances Nigerian law enforcement's capability to prevent, detect, and investigate terrorism threats; secure Nigeria's borders; and manage responses to terrorist incidents. ATA's primary partners are the Nigerian Police Force (NPF), Customs Service, Immigration Service, and National Emergency Management Agency. ATA represents the only donor assistance to Nigerian law enforcement on identifying, diffusing, and the safe disposal of improvised explosives devices (IEDs). ATA curriculum has been integrated into NPF training curriculum, supporting its ability to respond to IED attacks in Abuja and to deploy to the northeast part of the country where Boko Haram attacks are the most frequent.
- Countering violent extremism (CVE) programs aim to limit recruits to BH by reducing sympathy and support for its operations, through three primary objectives: (1) building resilience among communities most at risk of recruitment and radicalization to violence; (2) countering BH narratives and messaging; and building the CVE capacity of government and civil society. Such efforts include promoting engagement between law enforcement and citizens, and elevating the role of women civil society leaders in CVE.
- The Center for Strategic Counterterrorism Communications has developed a strong partnership with the Government of Nigeria, and in conjunction with other international partners, provided assistance on developing a comprehensive communications strategy.
- Nigeria is an active member of the Global Counterterrorism Forum (GCTF), and the United States has used the multilateral platform the Forum offers to introduce justice sector officials from Nigeria and neighboring countries to a series of judicial tools to investigate and prosecute terrorism cases in conformity with their domestic and international human rights obligations. As part of this effort, the United States and Nigeria have co-hosted a series of experts' workshops in Abuja on these issues. In addition, Nigeria will join the United States as one of the founding members of the International Institute on Justice and the Rule of Law (IIJ), which will open its doors in June 2014 in Malta, and provide rule of law based training on how to counter terrorism and other transnational criminal activity within a rule of law framework. As a founding member, Nigeria will be expected to ensure its police, prosecutors, and prison officials are regular participants in IIJ trainings.
- Nigeria is a member of the Trans-Sahara Counterterrorism Partnership (TSCTP), a U.S. government-funded and implemented effort designed to enhance regional security sector capacity to counter violent extremism, improve country and regional border and customs systems, strengthen financial controls, and build law enforcement and security sector capacity. TSCTP provides counter-IED and civil-military operations training to the Nigerian military, and crisis management and border security training to Nigerian law

enforcement agencies. Nigeria also participates in larger regional training opportunities such as combat medical, military intelligence, communications and logistics training with other TSCTP partner nations (Algeria, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Senegal, and Tunisia).

- Nigeria has also agreed to become a pilot country to the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF), a GCTF-inspired initiative announced by Secretary Kerry at the September 2013 GCTF ministerial. This will enable community-based organizations in Nigeria to receive grants from the GCERF to carry out grass-roots CVE projects.
- The State Department's Counterterrorism Finance (CTF) program provides training that aims to restrict Boko Haram's ability to raise, move, and store money. CTF's current focus provides Nigeria with cross border financial investigations training to work effectively with counterparts in neighboring countries on critical CTF cases.